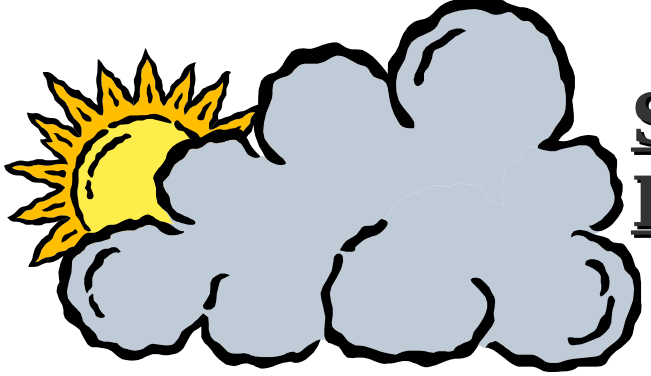
Hypothermia describes the rapid, progressive mental and physical collapse that is accompanied by the chilling of the human body's inner core. It is caused by exposure to cold, aggravated by wet, wind, and exhaustion. It is the <u># 1 KILLER</u> of outdoor

COLD KILLS IN 2 DISTINCT STEPS

1. EXPOSURE AND EXHAUSTION:
The moment your body begins to *loose heat* faster than it produces it, you are undergoing exposure. Your body makes involuntary adjustments to preserve *normal temperature in the vital organs,* and you start shivering.

2. HYPOTHERMIA:
Cold reaches the brain depriving you of good judgement and reasoning power. *You will not realize this is happening*. You will lose control of your hands. This is hypothermia. Your internal temperature is sliding downward. Without treatment, this slide leads to stupor, collapse, and



STEPS *to* PREVENT HYPOTHERMIA

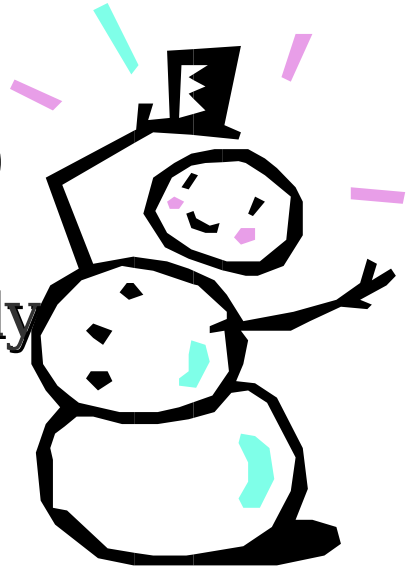
1. AVOID EXPOSURE

Stay dry.

Beware of the wind.

** *Understand the Cold!!* **

Most hypothermia cases develop in air temperatures between 30 and 50 degrees. Most outdoor enthusiasts simply can't believe such temperatures can be dangerous. The cold that

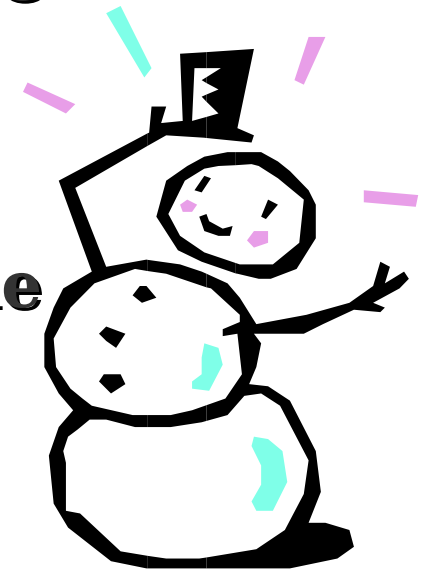


STEPS *to* PREVENT HYPOTHERMIA (cont.)

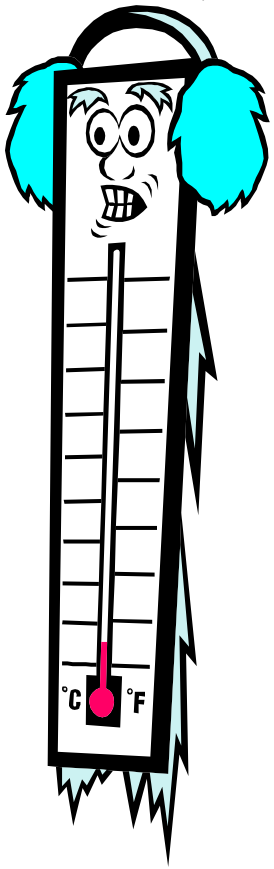
2. TERMINATE EXPOSURE

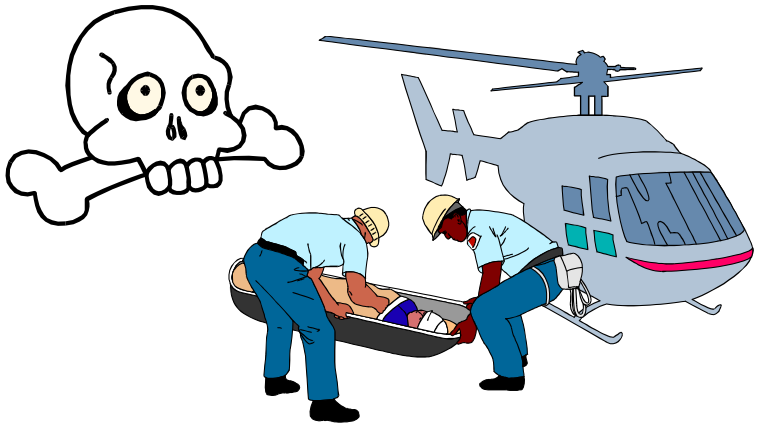
If you can not stay dry and warm under existing weather conditions, using the clothes you have with you, do whatever is necessary to be less exposed.

BE SMART ENOUGH TO GIVE UP REACHING THE PEAK, OR WHATEVER YOU HAD IN MIND. Get out of the wind and rain. Build a fire. Concentrate on making your camp or bivouac as secure and



Watch for: (in order to avoid) --->





NEVER IGNORE SHIVERING

Persistent or violent shivering is a clear warning that you are on the verge of hypothermia. MAKE CAMP OR GET BACK TO YOUR VEHICLE.

BEWARE OF EXHAUSTION

You may think you are doing fine when the fact that you are exercising is the only thing preventing you from going into hypothermia. If exhaustion forces you to stop:

1. **Your rate of body heat production instantly drops by 50% or more.**
2. **Violent, incapacitating shivering may begin immediately.**
3. **You may slip into hypothermia in a matter of minutes.**

SYMPTOMS

1. Uncontrollable fits of shivering.
2. Vague, slow, slurred speech.
3. Memory lapses, or incoherer
4. Immobile, fumbling hands.
5. Frequent stumbling.
6. Drowsiness (to sleep is to die.)
7. Apparent exhaustion. Inability to get up after a rest.

TREATMENT

**** The victim may deny he/she is in trouble. Believe the symptoms, not the person. Even mild symptoms demand immediate treatment ****

- Get the victim out of the wind and rain.

- Strip off *all* wet clothes.

- If the victim is only mildly impaired:

  -- Give him/her warm drinks. (only small amounts)

  -- Get him/her into dry clothes and a warm dry sleeping bag. Well-wrapped warm (not hot) rocks or canteens placed in the crotch and under the arms anywhere the main arteries are close to the surface of the skin, will hasten recovery.

TREATMENT (cont.)

- If the patient is semi-conscious or worse:

  -- Try to keep him/her awake. (Do not give hot liquids by mouth.)

  -- Leave him/her stripped. Put him/her in a sleeping bag with another person (also stripped) to transfer heat. If you can put the victim between two donors, skin to skin contact is very effective treatment.

- Build a fire to warm canteens and rocks for warming the victim.

- Transport the victim as soon as possible to the closest hospital for monitoring. It takes a very long time to warm the inner core and only a rectal hypothermia thermometer is long enough to find out what the inner core temperature really is.

Some TIPs to Remember

1. Wear clothes in layers
2. Cover the mouth & nose to help retain heat
3. Wear clothing that will not absorb water, but will breathe.
4. Wear clothing that will keep you warm even if it is wet, such as wool or some of the new synthetic materials (polypropylene, polorguard, fiberfill, quollofil) to guard against conduction.
5. Since largest heat loss is through uncovered skin (head, neck, hands, etc…), it's important to keep these areas warm and unexposed.

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THE END